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Negro Witch Doctor's Powers Fail To Save Him From Prison

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VALDOSTA, Ga., April 11.—(AP)—The vaunted powers of James Crumley, negro witch doctor who allegedly attempted to intimidate witnesses summoned in a murder case here, failed to save him from the Lowndes county jail last week, it was announced today—because Patrolman John Rogers does not fear black art.

The officer learned that Crumley allegedly had threatened and conversed with negroes summoned as witnesses for and against B. Stafford, negro, who is charged with slaying Willie Duncan on the night of February 28. Police officers are not afraid of voodoos, and the officer was not dismayed when, upon his arrest, Crumley shook a [illegible] carved walking cane which rattled ominously.

Several walking canes, intricately carved with human figures, fish, birds and beasts, as well as other objects, and studded with brilliants, pieces of mirrors and other decorations were seized by the officer when he arrested the negro. Other fetishes also were seized. Today, despite their supposed powers they are crowded with other junk in the police office.

Crumley, officers said, approached both witnesses for the defense and the prosecution, offering to lend his powers to the outcome of the case—for a certain sum of cash. He told the prosecutor he would cause B. Stafford to go to the electric chair—and he told Stafford's friends he would cause the jury to render an acquittal verdict.

Officers say that in their daily routine of work they often come in contact with such men voodooists who wield a great power among negroes.

Pennies, coated over with quicksilver, and blessed with a mumbled incantation, if worn around the ankle will prevent arrest, the doctors say.

Small bags, filled with dust, gathered in the dark of the moon from an old graveyard, black cats' bones, some aromatic seed and other mysterious objects constitute "jomos" and are highly valued and closely guarded by negroes.

Officers who have at times in the past torn open and examined such "jomos" did so over tearful protest of negro prisoners, who vowed ill luck would follow them for the remainder of their days.

Turpentine camp operators dread the visits of such negroes to their camps. Superstitious negroes, the operators say, are easily swayed by the words of such witch doctors, and men like Crumley are barred from most camps in the turpentine belt.

But despite his supernatural powers, despite his charmed walking canes and despite his other charms, the witch doctor Crumley is unable to free himself from the Lowndes county jail.